

Virginia Saltwater Development Fund

Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Research or Data Collection Project

Project Number: 1206-18

Date: 4/27/07

Title: R) Estimate and Assess Social and Economic Importance and Value of Menhaden to Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders and Region (3 Year Study)

“The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.”

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

NOTE: Please read the entire scoresheet before beginning, then provide comments, and circle () the appropriate score for each item. Thank You.

A. Problem Description and Resolution (20 points)

- 1. Comment on the adequacy of the problem description, background information, knowledge of available literature/data sources, and anticipated benefits.**

The proposal does a very good job at explaining the difficulties and trade-offs in managing menhaden. It also presents the basic conceptual framework in a manner that is clear to non-specialists.

- 2. Describe your views on the conceptual approach to solve the problem.**

The problem in managing a resource, like menhaden, is that it is not clear how to balance all of the competing interests. Trade-offs are inevitable and understanding the relative values of the competing uses enables managers to use a benefit-cost framework. The framework is also able to determine the winners and losers from an action, which is very important in predicting potential political resistance and potential mechanisms for compensating the losers from different resource management strategies.

SCORE (Circle one)

Poor

0

5

10

15

Excellent

20

B. Soundness of Project Design/Technical Approach (25 points)

1. Is there sufficient information to technically evaluate the proposal?

The conceptual framework is clear and well-presented, but the necessary details to evaluate the I/O model and survey and sampling design are not presented. The lack of detail on the specifics is in part a function of the proposal structure where the type and design of the survey work are to be determined at a later date (e.g., workshop funded by the NOAA). As a reviewer of a large proposal, this is not ideal as the quality of the proposed methods is not easily deduced. While I do not have any questions regarding the quality of the researchers involved, I am a little concerned that there is no researcher whose sole expertise is non-market valuation. And, as the proposal discusses, this is the most complex aspect of the proposed research.

2. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project design (thoroughness, practicality, methods, integration with other work, etc.)?

The strength of the proposal is the development of a robust and rigorous framework to evaluate ecosystem approaches to managing menhaden.

SCORE (Circle One)	Poor					Excellent
	0	5	10	15	20	25

C. Project Management and Experience/Qualifications of Personnel (15 points)

What is your opinion of the experience and capabilities of the Principal Investigator(s) to manage and conduct the work, the availability of facilities, and education and experience of assisting personnel.

Aside from my concern about the composition of the team (missing a non-market valuation specialist), the principal investigator has my fullest confidence.

SCORE (Circle one)	Poor				Excellent
	0	5	10	15	

D. Project costs (15 points)

Is the budget realistic and reasonable? Indicate any unreasonable costs.

The evaluation of the budget is hampered by the fact that the survey vehicle and design (e.g., web, in-person, mail, phone, etc), sample size, and sampling strategy are still to be determined. The large budget is not surprising, because doing non-market survey work is expensive. But evaluating the specific budget is difficult, as the costs are very dependent on the survey approach and sample size.

SCORE (circle One)	Poor			Excellent
	0	5	10	15

E. Value of the Project to Fisheries Managers (25 points)

Do you believe the results of this project will further management of the species described? Will the results be useful to managers?

The simple answer is yes. The results will be tremendously valuable to all parties (federal, regional, state, and local) involved in managing menhaden. This research could also serve as a model for applying ecosystem approaches to management in other regions in the United States and abroad.

SCORE (circle one)	Poor					Excellent
	0	5	10	15	20	25

PLEASE ADD ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS BELOW:

One thing I would like to add for your consideration is that it could make sense to fund this project for one year with the idea that the details on how the non-market valuation will be undertaken will be better spelled out by then. This way the authors could submit another proposal for this work with much more detail on the survey methods and costs in the next round. This is just a thought that you might consider if supporting the proposal at the full amount is not feasible given current funding limits.